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Goya on Sexual Violence: Testimony and Critique

This essay examines three prints from Goya's Disasters of War *to elucidate the complex moral analyses that the artist develops over the course of his famous print series. While the* Disasters of War *have often been understood as forms of historical testimony, the essay argues that the series is better understood within the eighteenth-century coordinates of critique and satire. It focuses on prints dedicated to sexual violence to underscore the dense layering of meanings that Goya achieves through: a) the sequential presentation of his image; b) the interplay between captions and images; and c) the combination of realist pictorial codes and abstraction.*

Keywords: *Goya, Image, Rape, War, Iconography*

En este ensayo se examinan tres de los Desastres de la guerra *que Goya dedicó a la violencia sexual para elucidar el complejo análisis moral que se desarrolla a lo largo de la serie. Aunque los* Desastres *frecuentemente se han interpretado como formas de testimonio histórico, se propone que las coordenadas más propicias para entender el proyecto son las de la crítica y sátira dieciochescas. Se resalta así la densidad semántica que el artista consigue a través de: a) la presentación serial de imágenes; b) la interacción entre textos e imágenes; y c) la combinación de códigos pictóricos realistas con elementos de abstracción.*

Palabras clave: *Goya, Imagen, Violación, Guerra, Iconografía*

In the *tour du force* critique of war that is Goya's *Desastres de la guerra*, modern-day viewers have often been struck by the prominence of women, both as combatants and as victims within the broader catalogue of horrors that the series famously assembles. If the truth of war excesses had never before been laid bare in quite the same way before Goya's *Disasters*, the same can be said of the truth of women's participation in armed conflict. Recent historical overviews of the participation of women in Spain's War of

Independence (Espigado, Romeo Mateo) make clear that Goya registered the phenomenon more extensively than any major European artist before him, and, in this sense, at the level of visual documentation, the series has rightly been credited with breaking fundamentally new ground in the representation of war. While visual documentation and testimony are an important part of Goya's work, the series does much more than simply exhibit facets of wartime violence that had largely remained outside of the frame for much of the history of European war art. Moral reflection, deliberation and critique – hallmarks of the enlightenment discourses in which Goya came of age – are just as important to his project as the more famous exhibition of horrors for which the series is commonly known today, and we miss something fundamental about the *Disasters* if we think of them primarily in terms of visual testimony.

While recent appraisals of Goya's print series have emphasized the documentary, proto-photographic dimensions of his enterprise (Basels), my intention in what follows is to foreground Goya's prints as c*omplex forms of critical deliberation*. In effect, I will be arguing that the analogies some critics draw between war photography and Goya's famous series is at best limited, and at worst profoundly misleading. To that end, I will focus on a sequence of three images that Goya devoted to wartime sexual violence with a view to emphasizing the complexity of Goya's reflections and the many layers of meaning that accrue within his images. Central to the semantic richness of the prints are a number of important phenomena that expand the image of Goya far beyond the role of visual documentarian. These include: 1) the tensions between pictorial naturalism and abstraction/simplification within Goya's visual idiom; 2) the effects of Goya's verbal artistry on the experience of viewing his images; 3) the way image-sequencing contributes to the meaning of the prints (Glendinning 224-25); and 4) Goya's complex approach to the question of witnessing (Wolf). As we will see, together these phenomena generate a viewing-experience in which the illusion of witnessing violence is often the starting point for something else, namely, complex moral and aesthetic critical reflection. By the end of my reflections, I hope it will become clear why we should resist the temptation to see Goya's prints as proto-photographs and instead situate his project within the coordinates of the artist's visual and moral imagination.

The *Disasters* I will discuss in detail are prints 9 ["No quieren"], 10 ["Tampoco"], and 11 ["Ni por esas"], but before doing so it is worth recalling that women are present as combatants almost from the outset of the series. Prints 4 ["Las mujeres dan valor"], 5 ["Y son fieras"], and 7 ["¡Qué valor!"] establish the presence of civilian women in harrowing scenes of struggle that make clear that women were no mere bystanders to the conflict. These

early prints also habituate viewers to the theme of women at war, and they raise questions concerning feminine courage during times of armed conflict. Goya lays a kind of groundwork with groups of images: early images condition the viewer with regards to those that follow, even when prints are not necessarily linked to one another through the captions.[1] In this case the early images of women fighting introduce the issue of women combatants. They are, like many of Goya's images, difficult to look at, but it is not until Prints 9, 10, and 11 that the sexualized dimensions of the struggle come to the fore:

Figure 1. Print 9. No quieren

Here women continue to fight (like prints 4, 5, and 7) but the stakes of the struggle are overtly sexual. At the center of the image a woman tries to fend off a soldier who has caught her in a violent embrace. With arms around her and bent legs trying to straddle her lower body, the soldier's intent is clear. His right hand clutches at the woman's dress, which he is beginning to raise, revealing the outline of her buttocks beneath it. She scratches at his face as she turns her head from him, and her stance reveals that she is trying to push herself away. The struggle between the two is visually amplified, not only by the pair's central position within the

composition, but also by strong tonal contrasts. In a deft exploitation of the medium's expressive potential, Goya has enveloped the woman's white dress in the darkness of her aggressor's uniform, and shadows border her garment on the ground. Slightly behind and to the right of the struggling couple, an older woman lunges toward the soldier with a dagger in hand, poised to plunge it into his back. He seems unlikely to overcome his victim. The caption beneath this scene reads, "They don't want to."

In this print Goya comments on one of the most common yet routinely hidden faces of war. His subject matter is attempted rape.[2] As earlier images in the series make clear, wartime violence has conventionally been conceived and waged in strongly sexualized terms, and it has often unfolded within a largely phallic pattern of thinking: transgressing borders in order to penetrate, occupy and possess can describe both what armies traditionally attempt to do to enemy territory and what rapists try to do to their victims. If earlier prints exhibit the sexualized patterns of thought and behavior that have traditionally governed the way war is imagined and prosecuted, however, here Goya shows viewers where such patterns routinely lead. For centuries, women of the vanquished were treated as spoils of war, there for the taking (Lafuente 140), like other enemy possessions. Although a loose body of legal work decrying wartime rape had emerged by the time of the Napoleonic Wars, it nevertheless remained a widespread practice. Historians have documented that, within theaters of combat such as the Iberian Peninsula, sexual violence and the threat of such violence was in fact an important psychological weapon in the struggle to control a hostile civilian population. The fact that Goya denounces the practice as one of war's disasters is, historically speaking, a relatively novel and modern moral stance on sexual violence.

The print is also a fascinating example of the strange temporality of many of the *Disasters of War*, which are of their era but continue to speak to ours in telling ways. War rape is now, of course, generally considered a crime under international law, but it is prosecuted very irregularly in comparison to other forms of atrocity. In addition, common as it has been from the 1800s to today, war rape has rarely if ever been part of the public face of war. As tightly interwoven into wartime violence as it is, rape is a dimension of warfare that has routinely been excused, minimized, or rationalized away. This is in part because shame hovers over it, for perpetrators and victims alike. The raped, we know, come forward in far fewer numbers than victims of other forms of violence, and in the modern era at least, war rapists do not usually boast publicly about their exploits. Rape typically occurs off-stage, as it were. Even when it is sanctioned or used systematically, official disavowals usually follow. There is something to be said then, for the seemingly simple act of making attempted rape

visible in a visual idiom that departs from the mythological rapes that had more frequently populated the archive of Western art up to Goya's days. In taking up the subject, Goya shows viewers something that conventional representations of war regularly omit, something that is rarely made visible today.

In this image, Goya situates the attempted rape alongside a river, and he places a watermill in the background. In terms of composition the watermill clearly provides a visual counterbalance to the woman with the knife, while the river delineates the upper and lower halves of the image. The detail with which Goya has depicted the watermill, however, seems something of a departure from the more abstract treatment of background in the preceding prints. What one usually finds in the background of the *Disasters* are dark masses, undefined shapes, or broad and at times grainy fields of aquatint. Why devote such detail to the watermill and its reflection in a river? It could be that Goya is signaling that the scene is taking place away from public scrutiny, on the outskirts of town, where watermills were typically located. Even so, the image does not deliver the specificities of a distinctive, particular location here. The depiction of place remains general, and it is largely symbolic.[3]

In addition, there are reasons to believe that Goya has set up a fascinating conceptual game within this background. "Water" and "watermill" are the key terms of a well-known Spanish proverb, *llevar el agua a su molino*. Literally translated, the expression means, "to carry water to one's mill," and it is a colloquial way of saying "to take advantage of a situation." For readers familiar with the proverb, the water and the mill in the background could be a symbolic commentary on what is happening in the foreground. Rape accompanies war, the print suggests, but rape is also a taking advantage of the occasion of war. It is an example of the way concepts and graphic images become intimately intertwined in Goya, even before one reads his captions.

The print also provides an example of the way Goya works with the twofold nature of viewing and reading his prints. On one level, this image relies for its effects on our indulging the illusion that we are looking at a would-be rapist and the women who are resisting him. At the same time, however, what we see in the background has been constructed in order to reward a non-naturalistic approach to pictorial space. The viewing experience entails shifting from naturalist illusion to more figurative understandings of what has been depicted. It requires the capacity to respond morally to the terrible immediacy of what is happening in the foreground while adopting a more distanced, conceptual or aesthetic

understanding of the image in the background. "Look and be moved," Goya's prints seem to say, "but do not forget the artifice of what you see."

For its part, the caption, "They do not want to," colors the experience of viewing this print in intriguing ways. In a first moment, the words seem almost unnecessary. One can see rather plainly that the women are resisting and do not want the man to succeed. Why repeat with words what is already fairly evident in the image? More importantly, why raise the question at all? Rape is, by definition, unwanted. The caption could be an emphatic gesture in which the words and the image reinforce one another, but it seems to do more than merely emphasize what we already see. "They do not want to," is not the same thing as "they are resisting," or "they are fighting." The caption describes the women's internal dispositions, and it comments on something integral to the phenomenon of rape. "They do not want to" expressly relates what we see in the image to questions of feminine will and, more importantly, to the question of feminine desire. In addition to the women's will to resist, the caption addresses the realm of sexual wanting: it asserts very clearly that neither woman has any sexual interest in the assailant.

In doing so, Goya's words unequivocally counter the myth of complicity that has historically accompanied and justified rape, the myth, persistent to this day, that women "really want to," even if they resist, and there is, in addition, another facet of the original caption that is not fully conveyed in English translation. When applied to people, the Spanish verb *querer* in Goya's "No quieren" can communicate not just desire but also affection. "They do not want to" is also, in a fainter, secondary sense, "they do not love." The caption thus intimates that rape – here, attempted rape – is more than a physical assault. Goya's words underscore that rape aims to violate the will, desire, and affective disposition of those whom it targets. A psychologically complex and comparatively modern understanding of sexual violence, the caption also suggests at least one additional idea. Attached to an image in which the aggressor seems very unlikely to succeed – the older woman is about to plunge a knife into his back – Goya's words subtly intimate that these women will not be raped *because* "they do not want to."[4] It seems logical enough: the women are resisting, and it appears that they will not in fact be raped. This depiction of apparently successful resistance, however, is the first moment in a sequence, and the caption is again setting readers up for what will come next:

Figure 2. Print 10. Tampoco

More hand-to-hand fighting. Bodies are intertwined, and it takes some time to discern the details of what is happening. There are at least three soldiers here, each violently coupled with a different victim. The first and most dramatic pair occupies the foreground, just right of center, where a woman in a white dress has been toppled. Like her counterpart in the previous print, her garment contrasts strongly with the darker, menacing tones around her. Her face, in profile, and the position of her arms suggest that she has just hit the ground and is struggling to get her bearings. Her feet dangle in the air, and the diagonal line defined by the lighter tones in the image, from upper left to lower right, accentuates the movement of her fall. The gloved arm of her aggressor dramatically crosses her at the waist, and Goya emphasizes the power of this violent embrace by taking some license with perspective. The arm is enormous and out of proportion in comparison to other limbs in the image. Behind this couple, to the left, a second soldier, his back to the viewer, hunches over another victim. In contrast to this soldier's solid stance, his victim's legs are up in the air, one on each side of the aggressor. Whoever is on the ground has been thrown back with legs spread apart. The soldier is in fact pinning a leg under his right arm. A third

pair, behind and to the right of the couple in the foreground is more difficult to make out, but something similar appears to be underway. We see a soldier bent over someone, and a woman's leg juts out below him. Goya has again posed the bodies in ways that underscore the sexual nature of the aggression. The struggles here involve raw, bodily force in a macabre kind of wrestling. This is not regular combat. Swords and a hat are on the ground near the horizon-line to the right, and other equipment, perhaps a backpack, rests in the foreground to the left. Such elements, which again provide compositional balance, also qualify the narrative in suggestive ways: The soldiers have put their weapons down in preparation for what they are about to do, and the heavy horizontal lines Goya has used to darken background and foreground suggests that they act under cover of darkness.[5]

Like the preceding print, the subject here is attempted rape, but Goya's sequence has turned the tables when it comes to likely outcomes. The previous aggressor was moments away from succumbing to the older woman's dagger. These would-be rapists appear to be moments away from realizing their intent. They are in dominant positions vis-à-vis those they assault, and they seem to be overpowering their victims. Perceiving this shift is in fact an important facet of the experience Goya has set up for readers as they turn from the previous print to this one. The earlier caption read, "They do not want to." Here, under such different circumstances, Goya's caption states, "Neither do they." To move from one print to the next is consequently to entertain two radically different imagined outcomes despite the fact that the victims in both cases "do not want to." If the previous print subtly suggested that avoiding rape was somehow linked to such "not wanting," the new caption now utterly dismantles such thinking. The victims here also "do not want to," but their circumstances are different, and, by all counts, they are about to be raped. Viewing the two prints in sequence prompts the realization that when rape takes place, it has little to do with what the victims want or how strongly "they do not want to." Some of those who resist may in fact evade rape. Others who resist will not. The point, of course, is not that resistance is unimportant but rather that, like other disasters of war, rape happens, despite the resistance. In this regard, the sequence takes aim at another longstanding myth concerning rape, the myth still heard in some quarters today that women would not be raped if they simply resisted enough.

The refutation of such an idea emerges from viewing the two prints in sequence, and it is an additional example of what can be lost when Goya's prints are approached in isolation. Like reading, however, sequential viewing is more than the one-way, linear movement it initially seems to be. We usually imagine ourselves moving forward along a timeline, from beginning to end, but the activity also involves repeated backward glances.

As we progress, we modify the way we understand what we have already seen. The meaning of resistance to rape in the previous print is subtly altered, for example, by what we have seen here. Such alteration often happens within sequences that are linked together by their captions. Early examples in the series include Prints 2 "Con razón o sin Ella" ("With reason or without it") and 3 "Lo mismo" ("The same thing"), Prints 4 "Las mujeres dan valor" ("The women give courage") and 5 "Y son fieras" ("And they are wild beasts"), or now Prints 9 "No quieren" ("They do not want to") and 10 "Tampoco" ("Neither do they"). In each of these groupings, the later print retroactively modifies the meaning of its predecessor.

This back-and-forth movement can also traverse the series more broadly. Looking at these scenes of intended rape, for example, could lead one to reconsider the women combatants presented earlier in the series. In those earlier prints, the presupposition was that the women depicted were partisans fighting for the Spanish cause. Returning to those images now, however, we might legitimately ask whether the women are not also fighting for something more personal, indeed more intimate, because they know, as we ourselves have just seen, what can befall women who are defeated by enemy soldiers. The earlier images do not suddenly become more obviously about rape than they were before, but the possibility of rape begins to inform these scenes in ways that were not initially apparent. The question of feminine courage that Goya poses in the earlier prints becomes more complex, and more troubled, by what we have just read. What was initially presented in terms of courage – Print 4 ["Las mujeres dan valor"], Print 6 ["Qué valor!"] – , it now seems, might also have been a desperate struggle not to be raped. Conversely, the question of courage migrates forward, beyond its initial context. Precisely because we have looked at earlier prints of fighting women, we might ask whether the women we see now, struggling against an aggression that is more obviously sexual, are any less courageous than those who came before them. We might also notice than when rape is more openly the subject, courage disappears from the captions. These are examples of the kinds of visual and conceptual association that Goya's prints set up by virtue of their sequential presentation. Whether intuitively or more purposefully, artists inevitably engage the way the experience of viewers unfolds in time. In the *Disasters of War*, Goya works with it in deliberate ways in order to create multiple, shifting layers of meaning as readers move through the series, and the third print in this sequence is a final, masterful example:

Figure 3. Print 11. "Ni por esas"

Yet another scene of sexual violence, and once more soldiers clearly have the upper hand. In the foreground, dramatically, a mother is being dragged backwards by her assailant while her infant lies on the ground. Behind and above them, left of center, a second woman, her hands together in a supplicant's pose, pleads with a soldier who has her by the arms. Just to the right of her, and behind the soldier doing the dragging, we see the head of a third man. His comrade in the foreground blocks his torso, but his legs are visible in the shadows, where they have been rendered in profile and in a slightly lighter tone that angles down toward the lower right corner of the image. Although easily overlooked, his posture and the crumpled white dress into which he leans suggest strongly that he has mounted his victim and is in the act of raping her. Still further to the right, deeper in shadows and more difficult to see, a fourth woman is on the ground, toppled with her back toward us as an assailant hunches over her. Her head is at his waist in what could very well be forced fellatio, or it could be that he is climbing on top or her. The darkness makes it difficult to know for sure. In contrast to this shadow-world, the belltower and windowed facade of a church occupy the background to the far left of the image.

Goya's composition fully dramatizes the events taking place.[6] The bright, diagonal line, from the mother's foot to her aggressor's shoulder, highlights the forceful movement of this central pair, and irregularities along that line convey poignant nuances: the infant on the ground, now separated from his mother; the tense curves of the mother's legs and arched back as she tries to hold herself up; the head that falls away from an eerily straighter, tauter line running from the woman's shoulder to her assailant's. At the center of the image, the soldier's gloved hands clasp the mother's wrists. His head is bandaged, but the wound clearly has not diminished him physically. He towers over his victim, and his hands and arms are almost twice as thick as hers. Although he is exerting some effort to pull her back, the task does not appear to be especially difficult. The expression on his face is disturbingly calm, as if he were simply pulling an object across the ground.

A second, strong line of composition, from upper left to lower right, follows the curve of the archway under which the aggression is taking place. This line intersects with the soldier's arm and extends along his sash and down the legs of the man behind him. Echoes of these principal lines can be found elsewhere within the image. The tilt of the pleading woman's body as she tries to back away from her attacker, for example, repeats the angle of the figures in the foreground, reinforcing the sense of movement from left to right. Similarly, the mother's body and head begin to delineate a curve (completed by the aggressor's right leg) that mimics the archway above it. Much of the composition hinges on the intersection of straight and curved lines, as if distilling the sexual aggression into a geometry of the masculine and the feminine.

Equally rich is the symbolism with which Goya imbues tonal contrasts in this image: light and shadow, the public and the hidden, the spiritual and the carnal. Each of these oppositions is organized within the basic tonal division Goya sets up between the left and right sides of the image. In turn, much of the drama of the scene stems from Goya's depiction of movement from one realm to the next. The women's terror and desperation come from an understanding of what awaits them in the shadows, a darkness that is moral as well as physical. It is no coincidence then, that movement into the gloom is also movement away from the church. As we have already seen, when Goya places well-defined buildings in the background of his *Disasters*, the motivation is often conceptual rather than naturalistic. In this case, the presence of the church establishes a powerful symbolic contrast: extreme moral transgressions are taking place against the backdrop of an institution widely understood at the time to be a societal repository of moral reflection and instruction. The print thus underscores an idea that recurs with

regularity across the series as a whole, the notion that the events depicted are moral disasters as much as they are physical catastrophes. While Goya's prints attest to the horrific face of war, they just as frequently point to the broader calamity that accompanies armed conflict: the suspension or outright collapse of the ethics that would normally work to prevent such horrors.

The church also takes on additional historical nuances when considered in light of the conflictive relationship between Spanish Catholicism and the Napoleonic regime. While Bonapartist Spain officially maintained Catholicism as the state religion for pragmatic reasons, in practice the Imperial Army saw the Catholic Church as a bastion of Spain's *ancien régime*, the very reactionary order it sought to dismantle. As later prints in the series record, churches, monasteries and convents were routinely pillaged, and the clergy themselves were often targeted. Napoleonic secularism fueled such hostilities, to be sure, but so did the fact that the Spanish Church was a key political actor in the uprisings against Napoleon. Using the power of the pulpit over a largely illiterate populace, the clergy had effectively prompted the masses to wage holy war against the foreign aggressor in what amounted to a modern crusade. The fact that rape in this print is taking place within view of a church resonates with such antagonisms, and it may speak to the soldiers' historic disregard for the institution of the Church in Spain.

Beneath this scene of violence, we read, "Not even like that," or "Not even that way." The original Spanish, *ni por ésas*, is an expression used when an event or effort has made no difference to an outcome. It implies an unalterable state of affairs, and here it refers to the fact that under no circumstance will the rapists be deterred. Not even with a church in sight. Not even if you beg for mercy. Not even if you are a mother with her child. Goya is once more exploiting feminine archetypes to great effect. With the church behind them, the mother and the pleading woman are figures of the feminine sacrosanct, and their function here is to emphasize that in times of war nothing is sacred, set apart, revered or exempted from violation. As archetypes of the feminine sacred, these figures suggest that, symbolically at least, rape is a kind of desecration.

It also becomes clear retrospectively that this print has been carefully positioned as a third, culminating moment within the series of reflections on rape that Goya was pursuing in the previous two prints. Like the women before them, these women also rather obviously "do not want to," but in contrast to their predecessors, they are not fighting. The most active of them is pleading, appealing to her aggressor's sense of compassion, and even so, the caption avers, she too will be raped. In this regard, "Not even like that" refers not only to what we see in the image, but also to the efforts to avoid

rape that we have viewed in the preceding two prints. The sequence of images thus conveys that neither physical resistance nor appeals to religion, morality or compassion can guarantee anything when it comes to the question of rape. To read the three prints in sequence is to confront slowly the notion that *nothing* can effectively stop wartime rape, an idea that no single print conveys on its own.[7] The most common English translation of the caption as "Nor these," misses the mark entirely.

The rape sequence is also a revealing example of the way artifice in the *Disasters* raises questions concerning the meaning of what we see. Goya invites us to view his images as if we were witnesses to the violence, but time and again he also pulls us back to the knowledge that we are looking at prints. The initial affective responses his images so powerfully provoke are routinely channeled into more reflective modes of engagement. Sequencing, the wordplay of the captions, and the non-naturalistic elements of each image beckon readers to deliberate about what they view. While we may momentarily imagine ourselves to witness attempted rape in the preceding images, for example, the experience of seeing three separate rape scenes in a carefully orchestrated sequence draws attention to our activity as we move from one print to the next, adjusting our understanding along the way.

Similarly, the Goya's positioning of the notional viewer raises questions about the act of looking itself. The men in the three images I have briefly reviewed *do not want to be seen*. They have searched for the outskirts of the city (Print 9), the cover of night (Print 10), and the shadows under an arcade (Print 11).[8] Within the worlds depicted, how is it then that we have nevertheless come to see them? More disturbingly, who would we have to be in these scenes in order to witness such events? The most plausible explanation is that we would be fellow perpetrators or potential victims, which is to say that we would be deeply implicated in the events taking place. If that were not the case, however, if we were unseen bystanders gazing at attempted rape, morally speaking, we would be involved in a most callous kind of voyeurism. Given such choices, it would be understandable, and far more comfortable, to return our attention to the fact that we are *not* witnesses to rape but rather viewers of images for whom looking without being seen is simply a common pictorial convention. Even so, the uncanny proximity between the position of the voyeur within the scene and our own position here, safely out of sight, looking at a rape scene, is enough to give most viewers some pause.

The three images I have discussed in detail are fine examples of what can be lost on viewers who approach the *Disasters of War* primarily through the lens of visual testimony. That Goya wanted to bear witness to war's

calamities is not in doubt, but the artist was clearly motivated by much more than making visible a kind of violence that had scarcely made it into the inventory of European images of war. His prints are complex forms of critical deliberation, multi-layered forms of thought and critique that draw on far more than the impulse to catalogue the horrors. What these prints "say" about war rape, for example, goes well beyond the conventional bounds of testimony. In this sense, while the *Desastres* share with the subsequent history of war photography the moral urgency of documenting war horrors, they are decidedly not photographic in many important ways as well. To begin, the kind of sexual violence depicted in the images we have considered *could never be photographed*: to photograph is to actually be somewhere with the camera, in proximity to the subjects, and to photograph rape would, morally speaking, be unforgivable. Goya's images do indeed have a "you are there" quality, but much of the power of his artistry and its critical force draws on the fact that he and viewers are not actually there, but rather engaging carefully wrought illusions of being there. The terrain is deliberately imaginative, in the sense that it invites viewers to imagine what it would be like to have been there while subtly reminding them that they were not, that what is before them is an image.

For all of their gruesome detail then, we would do well to remember that the *Desastres* are not exercises in documentary, but rather historically informed, *imagined* visual and verbal occasions for moral commentary. One need only look at Goya's *Caprichos* next to the *Desastres de la guerra* in order to appreciate immediately their family resemblance, which is to say the way both series place viewers in the "anytime" and "any place" of satire rather than the pictorial space-time of historically singular events. In the end, what makes Goya's *Desastres* so modern may very well be the way they exceed the hic et nunc that inspired them, aiming instead at modes of human behavior that belong to a much deeper time than Spain's War of Independence or the Napoleonic Wars. Many of our contemporary critical historicisms are poorly suited – indeed uncomfortable – when it comes to addressing such deep time, but it remains a pressing need.[9] If these images speak to us today, it is not because they were attempts to "photograph" history, as it were, but rather because they were forms of moral deliberation on the human propensity to violence – in the images we have considered, sexual violence – a propensity that could not remain more sadly contemporary.[10]

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NOTES

1 Lafuente was among the first to argue that the order in which the images are arranged in the series generates "poematic," which is to say meaning-making, effects (49).

2 For the history of wartime violence against women as well as the slow and tenuous emergence of rape as a war crime within international law, see Askin (18-46). For commentary and analysis of rape as a constant across virtually all modern wars, see Branche. Citing a wide range of historical sources, Sayre (137) and Vega (98-100) document how common rape was during the war in Spain.

3 Matilla attributes two different functions to the watermill: "it situates the action in a rural space, and symbolically it represents the violence, which turns unendingly" (208).

4 Nineteenth-century readers (Piot 361-62; Brunet 50) assumed that the old woman in Print 9 was the victim's mother. Hoffman sees the image as an ironic reworking of the triad (man, prostitute, madam) that appears with frequency in the *Caprichos*. He interprets the watermill as a symbol of heaviness, incarceration, and self-sufficiency (127).

5 Dérozier interprets the swords and cap on the ground as a commentary on the abandonment of the key features of the identity of professional soldiers (854). Bozal focuses on archways and their significance in the construction of "parabolic" pictorial space (216).

6 Hughes considers this print "compositionally the most developed of the three rape scenes, an image that shows to a sublime degree what power Goya could develop when his talent for showing awful events in terms utter compositional starkness was fully at work" (292). Hoffman detects possible echoes of Poussin's *Massacre of the Innocents* in Print 11, and he notes that the head thrown back in anguish was a sign of pathos within the gestural language of late eighteenth-century painting.

7 The scandalous, disheartening inevitability of rape during wartime has been analyzed recently by Seifert: "When looking back through history we find much to suggest that within this ritual one rule of the game has always been that violence against women in the conquered territory is conceded to the victor … We have no evidence that any negotiations have ever been carried out to halt this outrage against women" (58).

8 "The notion of secrecy, deeds committed beyond the light of day, rape among them, courses through *Los desastres de la guerra*. … Most of all, under archways. These are the places Goya sought to shine his light" (Ciofalo 123).

9 For a classic meditation on the challenges of conceptualizing historical time and its multi-layered temporalities, see Kosellek.

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